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Services



AIR FORCE YOUTH SPORTS PROGRAM

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This manual implements AFI 34-801, *Youth Programs*, and gives the guidance for planning and implementing organized individual and team sports activities. This manual is not applicable to the Air National Guard.

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Chapter 1

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

1.1. Purpose. The youth program offers a wide array of organized sports activities for youth to help them develop desirable physical skills and to mature emotionally and socially. The sports program provides opportunities for children to have contact with other youths, volunteer leaders, and youth program staff. It also provides opportunities for parents to socialize with other parents and for adults to contribute to the Air Force community by serving as volunteers in youth programs.

1.2. Program Eligibility. Youths eligible for youth programs as authorized in AFI 34-801, Youth Programs, may participate in organized youth sports programs. The medical examination requirement outlined in paragraph 7.1 must be met.

1.3. Benefits. The benefits of participation in youth sports are numerous and many occur within the context of a good program. Benefits include:

- 1.3.1. Developing positive personal, social, and psychological skills (e.g., self-worth, self-discipline, teamwork, effective communication, goal setting, and self-control).
- 1.3.2. Obtaining enjoyment and recreation.
- 1.3.3. Developing physical fitness.
- 1.3.4. Developing appropriate physical skills.
- 1.3.5. Enhancing the likelihood of participation in physical activities throughout life.
- 1.3.6. Learning the rules and strategies of sports.
- 1.3.7. Developing a respect for rules as facilitator of safe and fair competition.
- 1.3.8. Denouncing drug use as the way to recreate, escape from reality, or enhance performance.

1.3.9. Having contact with positive role models and interacting with adults.

1.3.10. Relating academic and other skills to sports performance, (e.g., how to score using numbers).

1.4. Program Philosophy and Standards. Air Force youth sports programs will follow the National Standards for Youth Sports developed by the National Alliance for Youth Sports and develop programs consistent with the philosophy outlined in these standards. These standards are included in attachment 2. Bases not currently implementing all of these standards must begin doing so by implementing them for the youngest age grouping in each sport at the start of that sport's regular season upon publication of this manual and continue evolving toward full implementation for all age groups by 1 October 2000. Following these standards helps ensure that the youth sports program is fun for youth and is conducted to encourage the continued participation of youth regardless of their athletic ability. If a standard is required by AFI 34-801 or other parts of this manual it must be implemented within 90 days of the publication of this manual.

1.5. Concept of Winning. Participants can learn from both winning and losing if winning is placed in a healthy perspective. Staff and volunteers should teach players winning is not the primary goal. Do not define success as winning. Teach players that losing a game or event is not a reflection on their own self-worth. Staff and volunteers should inform participants that success is related to effort and is found in striving for the best they can do.

Chapter 2

PROGRAM CONCEPTS AND GOALS

2.1. Program Concepts and Program Goals. Prior to organizing a sports program, the youth director must conduct a needs assessment survey involving youths and parents, and establish goals and objectives for the program based on the data. The following guidelines will be used in developing goals and objectives.

2.1.1. Fun and Enjoyment. Provide all youths, talented and less talented, ages 5 through 18, with opportunities for participation, fun, and enjoyment.

2.1.2. Leisure Skills Development. Provide opportunities for youth to develop lifetime leisure skills.

2.1.3. Physical Development. Assist youths with physical development by:

2.1.3.1. Teaching fundamental and safe sports skills appropriate for their age.

2.1.3.2. Providing opportunities to improve their physical conditioning.

2.1.3.3. Teaching sound health habits.

2.1.3.4. Providing safe playing areas and proper supplies

and equipment. See attachment 3 for suggestions for supplies and equipment.

2.1.4. Psychological Development. Help youths develop psychologically by:

2.1.4.1. Fostering the development of self-worth and personal identity.

2.1.4.2. Providing opportunities to express and control emotions.

2.1.4.3. Creating a learning environment.

2.1.5. Social Development. Help youths develop socially by providing opportunities:

2.1.5.1. To have fun with others.

2.1.5.2. To learn independence and the importance of teamwork.

2.1.5.3. Learn cooperation and sportsmanship.

2.1.5.4. To develop leadership skills and initiative.

2.1.5.5. To learn how to compete--how to put winning or losing in perspective.

Chapter 3

STAFF POSITIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1. Positions and Responsibilities. The Services squadron, through oversight of the youth support flight chief, is responsible for providing the youth sports program as a part of the overall youth program refer to AFI 34-801. The youth director is responsible for planning and implementing the youth sports program as a part of the youth program. The overall youth sports program must be approved by the youth support flight chief.

3.1.1. Youth Director Responsibilities. Through coordination with other base agencies, the youth director is responsible for:

3.1.1.1. Providing opportunities for youths to participate in a variety of individual and team sports.

3.1.1.2. Preparing submissions to the yearly appropriated, nonappropriated, and United Way/Combined Federated Campaign budgets to support the youth sports program.

3.1.1.3. Recommending fees needed to contribute to meeting established Air Force and major command (MAJCOM) financial goals.

3.1.1.4. Establishing, coordinating, and publishing by-laws related to sports programs.

3.1.1.5. Procuring and providing supplies and equipment necessary to support the program.

3.1.1.6. Approving schedules with off-base teams or leagues.

3.1.1.7. Serving as the chief official charged with overall administration and operation of sports leagues.

3.1.1.8. Making final decisions on all sports program operational matters.

3.1.2.1. Youth Sports Director. For bases having a youth sports director, the responsibilities include:

3.1.2.1.1. Recruiting, training, and appointing volunteers to act as league administrators, managers, coaches, and other related positions within the sports program.

3.1.2.1.2. Organizing and conducting meetings with league administrators in regard to player registrations, player evaluations, drafts, practices, game schedules, issue of uniforms and equipment, coaches certification and training, etc.

3.1.2.1.3. Along with league administrators, maintaining game results, and team standings (where applicable), ensuring their availability to coaches and interested persons.

3.1.2.1.4. Training, scheduling, and supervising game officials when necessary.

3.1.2.1.5. Scheduling and coordinating the maintenance and upkeep of playing facilities.

3.1.2.1.6. Properly controlling, maintaining, and accounting for all program supplies and equipment.

3.1.2.1.7. Providing administrative support to league administrators.

3.1.2.1.8. Arranging transportation for teams when required.

3.1.2.1.9. Coordinating and conducting all registration activities.

NOTE: If there is no youth sports director, the above duties are the responsibility of the youth director.

Chapter 4

VOLUNTEER POSITIONS

4.1. Effective Volunteer Management. Volunteers provide the additional manpower needed to conduct activities in the youth sports program. Volunteer services must be accepted according to AFI 34-101, *Services Programs and Patron Eligibility*. AFI 34-801 provides guidance for screening volunteers and the requirement for all specified volunteers to have an Installation Records Check (IRC). When practical, the youth sports director should contact the last two employers of each regular volunteer before selecting the volunteer to provide youth program services. When recruiting, tell candidates about the amount of time required for the position and the skills needed. Explain training requirements for coaches. Guide volunteers to be accountable and responsible for their actions. Maintain a record of the volunteer's hours of service. Management must develop methods of communicating to volunteers that their services are appreciated.

4.2. Selecting and Utilizing Commissioners and Coaches. League commissioners and league presidents may be needed to assist the youth sports director in the administration of league(s). At least 2 months prior to the start date of each major youth sports program, the youth sports director should recruit a league commissioner and president. The youth director and youth sports director should develop the basic youth sports program policies and ensure they reflect the overall youth program policies and goals. Commissioners and presidents may assist in the overall operation of the competitive program. The youth director and youth sports director, with the youth support flight chief's approval, will make final decisions on game situations.

4.3. League Commissioners and Presidents. The league commissioners and presidents are key volunteer positions recommended by the youth sports director and approved by the youth director. They will be responsible for:

- 4.3.1. Providing supervision of players to ensure their safety and welfare.
- 4.3.2. Assisting the youth sports director in recruiting and training managers, coaches, officials, and parent volunteers.

4.3.3. Ensuring all volunteers are briefed and kept current on league operations and administration.

4.3.4. Attending all scheduled league and division meetings.

4.3.5. Assisting the youth sports director in developing and submitting practice and game schedules to the youth sports director. (Schedules can be formulated through the use of RecTrac! software).

4.3.6. Recommending league by-laws and ground rules for play for each sport.

4.3.7. Reporting all injuries and incidents to the youth sports director immediately.

4.3.8. Ensuring everyone adheres to youth program policies and the rules and regulations governing play.

4.3.9. Assisting the youth sports director in all program related meetings and activities.

4.3.10. Reporting any suspected child abuse or neglect to the Family Advocacy Office.

4.4. Assignment of Returning Key Volunteers. Returning league administrators, managers, and coaches shall have priority in being assigned to a team; however, such an assignment should not be automatic. The factors to consider in making a selection are:

4.4.1. Persons who are positive, dependable, and supportive of the youth sports program.

4.4.2. Persons with certification training by a recognized organization or program in coaching techniques, sports medicine, and the psychology of working with youth athletes.

4.4.3. Returning managers or coaches within the same league. Returning managers or coaches moving from one league to another. This will also include the prior season's league administrators.

4.4.4. Newly arrived volunteers with prior youth coaching experience.

4.4.5. No coaches, including assistants, will change teams during the season unless it is approved by the league administrators and the youth sports director.

Chapter 5

COACHES AND OFFICIALS

5.1. Coaches. Coaches, volunteer and paid, are an extension of the youth program staff. They represent the integrity of the program being conducted and must support program objectives and policies. Coaches must be aware of the positive and negative impacts they can have on their players. Coaches must maintain an atmosphere which promotes the philosophy of the youth sports program. Coaches must be responsible to young athletes, parents, officials, and other coaches for:

- 5.1.2. Being knowledgeable of the policies and procedures pertaining to the youth sports program.
- 5.1.3. Providing a safe environment during practices, games, and related functions.
- 5.1.4. Acquiring necessary training to coach young athletes.
- 5.1.5. Being knowledgeable of the rules.
- 5.1.6. Communicating with parents.
- 5.1.7. Serving as a role model.
- 5.1.8. Reporting any suspected child abuse or neglect.
- 5.1.9. Adhering to the National Standards for Youth Sports.

5.2. Coaches' Registration. All volunteer managers, coaches, and league administrators will complete an AF Form 2040, **MWR Volunteer Personal Data**. A locally developed volunteer worksheet may be used to gather information needed to match the volunteer's interest with the youth program's need. The information is also useful in identifying previous youth services experience.

5.3. Coaches' Training. Proper training must be provided for all coaches. Sports directors must ensure coaches' training begins before the volunteer coaches work with children and that national certification is completed within 60 days of the beginning of the season, preferably before. The youth director must approve any exceptions. Training will include as a minimum:

- First aid and Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR).
- Psychology of coaching youth.
- Injury prevention.
- Practice organization.
- Coaching liability.
- Training and conditioning.
- Child and adolescent development.
- Diversity and sexual harassment issues.
- Techniques of coaching specific sport(s).

5.4. Coaches' Assignment Restrictions. A manager or coach in one league is normally not permitted to manage or coach in a second league or division during the same season. The youth director and sports director will decide on any exceptions to this policy. A manager or head coach may be permitted to be an assistant in another league or division.

This allows the coach or manager to be with his or her child if he or she has more than one child in the program. The league administrators and sports director will decide on any exceptions to this policy. League administrators, commissioners, presidents, and game officials should not be eligible to serve as managers or coaches. Exceptions must be approved by the sports director and youth director. Game officials may serve as a coach providing they do not officiate in the same league or division in which a team they coach is a member. Officials must not officiate in games in which their child is playing.

5.5. Evaluation of Coaches. The youth sports director should develop an evaluation program to identify those coaches who are able and willing to support the purposes of the youth sports program. The youth sports director will also establish and implement procedures to identify those whose services should not be continued because they are not fulfilling the objectives of the program. The youth sports director should observe each coaches' performance within the first month of volunteer service. Coaches must be able to present evidence of competency in coaching youth sports and must be judged by the youth sports director and youth director to be among the most qualified to serve as youth coaches. The results of the evaluation program for youth coaches should be used to determine the most qualified. Acceptable evidence for determining the most qualified may also include annual re-certification in programs such as the National Youth Sports Coaches Association.

5.6. Removal of Coaches. The youth support flight chief may delegate disciplinary actions related to removal of a coach to the youth director or youth sports director. If delegated, the youth director or youth sports director is authorized to remove any coach for failure to follow the guidelines for coaches' duties in the youth sports program or for failure to adhere to acceptable behavior for coaches as outlined in AFI 34-801.

5.7. Trainee Coaches. When new coaches without experience enter the youth sports program, it is desirable to place them with experienced coaches with proven abilities. Those abilities include use of proper teaching techniques, skill in communicating with players and other coaches, and presenting a positive self-image at all times.

5.8. Number of Coaches. Each team should have, as a minimum, the following number of authorized and designated managers, coaches, or assistants (exceptions may be granted by the youth sports director for reasons such as a heavy temporary duty (TDY) schedule, military duties, or family emergency):

- Basketball: Head coach, one assistant.

- Baseball/softball: Head coach, one assistant.
- Football: Head coach, three assistants.
- Soccer: Head coach, one assistant.
- Swimming: Head coach, one assistant.
- Gymnastics: Head coach, one assistant.

5.9. Selecting and Training Officials. Officials may be contract personnel or volunteers. Make every effort to ensure sporting events and league games are officiated by qualified officials trained in the policies of the youth sports program. If qualified officials are not available, conduct certification clinics for officials. These may include joint

clinics with other Services or youth agencies in the local community. In training officials, consideration should be given to the following:

5.9.1. Providing adequate space, time, materials, and qualified instructors to conduct clinics.

5.9.2. Conducting practice games to give officials hands-on experience.

5.9.3. Providing all equipment necessary for volunteer officials (whistles, chest protectors, masks, ball, and strike counters, etc.). Paid officials will be responsible for their own equipment.

Chapter 6

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

6.1. Parent Involvement. Involve parents in conducting the youth sports program. Conduct orientation programs to inform parents of the benefits and risks of the specific sport activity. Offer parents the National Standards for Youth Sports shown in attachment 2. Provide parents the basic rules of the sports, and proper conduct for both parents and athletes during practices and games. Also provide information on how to promote good sportsmanship and skill development for their child. Link parents with what happens in their child's life through sports activities.

6.2. Referral Systems. Support customers' youth sports pursuits even when it's not possible to directly provide the program or service the youth or parent is seeking. There are four areas which should be addressed through referrals:

6.2.1. Information. Youth sports participants want to know more about their favorite activity. Keep them enthused by setting aside an area in the youth center with information devoted to their interests.

6.2.2. Interest groups. Refer customers to individuals and local groups that share their interests. A bulletin board should be available for local activities.

6.2.3. Locations and destinations. Many customers already know what they want to do but need help in finding out where to go in the local area. Provide maps, brochures, and/or local community guides.

6.2.4. External suppliers of programs, services, or equipment. Since it is not possible to provide the setting customers may want, help them find someone who can.

Chapter 7

HEALTH ISSUES

7.1. Physical Examinations and Evaluations. Prior to participating in youth sports each child must have a physical examination. It is not necessary for a child to have an examination prior to the start of each sport during the year, but each child must have a yearly examination. Youth participating in Air Force youth sports programs must have the immunizations required by the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Centers for Disease Control for children of their age. The latter should be confirmed as part of the annual physical examination. If a large number of physicals are required, the youth director should coordinate special arrangements with the Chief of Hospital or Clinic Services at the medical treatment facility at least 2 months in advance. When feasible, Physical Therapy should be involved in providing the sports physicals.

7.1.1. Chronic Health Problems. Coaches must be alert to children who have chronic (on-going) health problems. Get detailed information from parents at the time of enrollment about specific health issues. Ensure this information is recorded on the child's enrollment form so that it will be available in the event of a change in coaches or staff.

7.2. Conditioning. Solicit parents' help in the conditioning of young athletes. Stress conditioning as an important step in preventing injuries. The conditioning process should include physical and mental preparation including motivating to compete, learning the sport and its rules, getting into shape through physical exercise, and developing good nutritional eating and sleeping habits.

7.3. Replenishing Fluids. Players should bring personal water bottles to practice fields and games when water fountains are not available. The coach should also bring additional water and cups. Players should drink plenty of water, especially during hot, humid weather. Salt tablets should never be administered to youth athletes. Encourage players to use the buddy system to watch for symptoms of heat prostration.

7.4. Awareness of Warning Signs. Medical assistance should be sought when the following warning signs are experienced by either players or coaching staff:

- 7.4.1. Irregular pulse, fluttering sensation in the chest.
- 7.4.2. Dull ache or heavy pressure sensation in the upper abdomen or chest.
- 7.4.3. Unusual shortness of breath (with or without chest pain).
- 7.4.4. Sudden numbness (especially in the left arm).
- 7.4.5. Extreme dizziness, loss of coordination, or loss of consciousness.
- 7.4.6. Sudden inability to see or speak.

7.5. First Aid Training. All paid and volunteer coaches and instructors participating in the youth sports program must have current certification in first aid and CPR and must be prepared to respond to emergencies which may occur during practices and games. Staff and volunteers must receive annual training on blood pathogen universal precautions and the exposure procedure to follow. Contact the Surgeon General's medical consultant to the youth program for assistance in identifying a source for the latter training.

7.6. Presence of a Qualified Medical Trainer. Since most Air Force youth sports events occur on an Air Force base with a physician available in the clinic or hospital, the presence of a qualified medical trainer at practices or games is not required. (Exception: Youth football games, tackle.) However, if the sport is occurring off base and medical treatment is not readily available, the presence of a qualified medical trainer is recommended. The head coach, or in his or her absence the assistant coach, must know where the closest telephone is in case of an emergency and how to obtain medical assistance at the location where the event is being held.

7.7. Playing After Injury or Illness. AFI 34-801 provides guidance on players returning to activities after injury or illness.

7.8. Weight Gain or Loss. Weight gain or loss to establish eligibility in programs such as wrestling or football is not recommended for youth athletes unless it is under the direction of a physician.

7.9. Combat Sports. Boxing is not authorized for youth sports programs.

7.10. Notification About Accidents. Complete the AF Form 1187, **Youth Flight Accident Report**, for any injury requiring professional medical treatment and any fatality in any program. The youth director must report both in writing and telephonically all cases reported on the AF Form 1187 to the youth flight chief or his or her supervisor. Have the youth flight chief notify the MAJCOM; Headquarters, Air Force Services Agency, Child Development and Youth Programs Branch (HQ AFSVA/SVPAC), (telephone DSN 487-4045 or fax DSN 487-2383); and Headquarters, United States Air Force, Services, Program Policy Division (HQ USAF/SVP), (DSN 664-6421 or fax DSN 664-0323) within 24 hours of an accident that results in the death or hospitalization of a youth.

7.11. Emergencies. In case of an accident requiring professional medical assistance, follow local Operating

Instruction procedures for emergency assistance. The head coach, or in his or her absence, the assistant coach, must have the telephone numbers for the emergency room and ambulance service. This person must also be knowledgeable of where the nearest telephone is located from the practice or game area.

7.11.1. Giving First Aid. The head coach, or in his or her absence, the assistant coach, must be calm with the youth, regardless of how serious the injury may be. American Red Cross (or an equivalent program) first aid procedures must be followed. Bleeding should be stopped and the wounds should be dressed with sterile bandages before players are allowed to return to play. Staff and volunteers should handle

blood and body fluids according to the procedures outlined in the National Health and Safety Performance Standards: Guidelines for Out-of-Home Child Care Programs. Staff or volunteers must wash hands with soap and water immediately after exposure to blood or body fluids following procedures recommended by the Centers for Disease Control guidelines. A portable first aid kit provided by the youth center must be available to support each team. The kit will contain adhesive bandages, sterile gauze, tape, liquid soap, disposable rubber or plastic gloves, zip-lock bags, small scissors, chemical cold packs, tweezers, and CPR mouthpiece with barrier. The requirement for chemical ice packs can be deleted when ice is available on site.

Chapter 8

SAFETY ISSUES

8.1. Safety Program. The youth staff, in coordination with base safety personnel, will develop a youth sports safety program plan designed to minimize the number of injuries in the youth sports program. Consider factors that may cause accidental injuries such as improper physical condition, emotional stimulus, and level of physical development that often accompanies competitive physical activity, overexertion, overly aggressive acts, infringement of rules, faulty equipment or facilities, inadequate supervision, lack of space, too many participants, and (or) lack of administration. The responsibility for safe play must be shared by the youth staff, league administrators, team coaches, officials, parents, and players.

8.2. Facilities Guidelines. Use the following guidelines to promote the safety of participants and spectators:

- 8.2.1. Indoor facilities should have dry, non-slippery floor surfaces that are kept clean.
- 8.2.2. Clear the area behind basketball goals.
- 8.2.3. Keep spectators at a safe distance from playing courts.
- 8.2.4. Ensure outdoor fields are free of trash, glass, sharp objects, ruts, grooves, or potholes.
- 8.2.5. Do not allow obstructions on the sidelines.
- 8.2.6. Gymnastics and exercise mats are free of rips and tears.
- 8.2.7. Secure all goals.
- 8.2.8. Use goal post pads, flexible flags, and rubberized sideline markers.
- 8.2.9. Ensure a flat stable pitcher's plate and home plate.
- 8.2.10. Secure fences and remove projections and obstructions.
- 8.2.11. Ensure bleachers are free from protrusions, sharp edges and splinters, loose bolts, cracked support braces, and improper locking mechanisms.
- 8.2.12. Ensure protection of spectators from the batting area for baseball and softball.

8.3. Appropriate Clothing. Clothing must be appropriate to the sport and the environment. Encourage parents to provide participants with a good fitting pair of shoes appropriate for the sport. Light, loose-fitting clothing made of natural fibers or a blend with cotton helps promote air circulation to the skin. They help keep the player cooler in hot weather and act to prevent chilling in cold weather.

8.4. Protective Equipment. Use sanctioned protective equipment, if available from the industry, in youth sports activities. This equipment must carry the National Operating Committee for Standards in Athletic Equipment (NOCSAE) or American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) approval for safety. Do not practice or play without

the proper equipment. Make sure the equipment fits the youth using it. Do not use broken equipment. Do not alter any equipment without permission from the manufacturer. Equipment and supplies that further prevent injuries while playing are listed at attachment 3.

8.5. Environmental Conditions. Exposure to extremes of environmental temperatures may upset the body's internal temperature regulation, resulting in serious health problems. Factors to consider are air temperature, percent of relative humidity, wind speed, lightning, altitude, and air pollution. Injuries and fatalities may occur when proper precautions and preventative measures are not applied. The command post should notify the youth center's supervisor on duty of any severe weather warnings so that outside activities can be curtailed as necessary. Encourage players to wear sunscreen and sunglasses on sunny days.

8.6. Managing Program Risks. The youth sports program must follow stringent standards of supervision in order to minimize the potential for accidents, injury, and fatalities. Management and coaches must be knowledgeable of their legal responsibilities. Equipment and playing facilities must be maintained in safe condition for the purposes for which they are intended. To minimize the risk of injury:

- 8.6.1. Warn players of potential dangers in each sport.
- 8.6.2. Teach activities by progression of difficulty.
- 8.6.3. Use trained, qualified personnel.
- 8.6.4. Conduct and document training programs.
- 8.6.5. Provide proper and safe equipment and facilities.
- 8.6.6. Provide adequate and timely medical treatment.
- 8.6.7. Establish and enforce safety and disciplinary rules.
- 8.6.8. Develop and implement standard procedures for inspecting and maintaining athletic equipment and facilities.
- 8.6.9. Distribute safe and properly fitting equipment bearing the NOCSAE seal, if applicable.
- 8.6.10. Arrange for proper supervision of all activities.
- 8.6.11. Determine the physical condition and impairments of athletes.
- 8.6.12. Ensure proper warm-up exercises and stretching are part of practice and game routines.
- 8.6.13. Instruct athletes on safe techniques and use of equipment.
- 8.6.14. Review AF Form 1187 to identify patterns.
- 8.6.15. Establish and follow procedures for minimizing the potential for child abuse and neglect.

8.7. High Risk Activities. AFI 34-801 outlines the requirement for proof of the instructor's qualifications in certain high risk sports, such as, but not limited to gymnastics, wrestling, and karate instruction. AFI 34-801 gives the required adult-to-child ratios for group activities.

Lower staff/child ratios should be maintained for some high risk activities, such as swimming or gymnastics to protect the health and safety of the participants.

Chapter 9

CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS

9.1. Emergency Conditions. When an emergency such as a natural disaster or conflict occurs on the installation or in the local area, the support group commander may suspend the youth sports program until the program can be safely be operated. When children and youths are brought into an installation as the result of emergency conditions at another installation, special efforts should be made to help the youth transition to their new environment including modifying the sports program when necessary. In these

situations the commander may waive the annual youth programs registration fees in order for youth to participate in sports and other activities. Offer opportunities for the new arrivals to participate in youth sports activities. Assist new families with information on getting required physical examinations for participants in organized youth sports program. As required, schedule special instructional clinics for the new participants joining the program under emergency conditions.

Chapter 10

YOUTH PROTECTION

10.1. Youth Protection Guidelines. The Air Force is committed to providing safe recreational settings for youth program participants. AFMAN 34-704, *Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect in Child Care Settings*, provides general guidance and will be used in conjunction with AFI 34-801.

10.2. Barriers to Child Abuse. No isolated one-on-one communication or contact between an adult and a youth is permitted. If situations require personal conferences, such as a coach's conference with a youth, the discussion is to be conducted in full view of other adults and youths. All aspects of the youth sports program must be open to observation by parents.

10.3. Transporting Youths. AFI 34-801 provides guidance for transporting youths. When the youth program transports youths, the name of the driver, the names of the passengers, the time of departure and expected return, and destination must be reported in advance to the youth director or the supervisor on duty. A procedure must be in practice for parent notification in case of emergency or changes that would affect the youth's arrival at home or a pick-up/drop-off time or location. Staff and volunteers may not transport youth in their private vehicles without written permission from the parents. Staff or volunteers will not transport youths in vehicles not designed for passengers, e.g., the back of a pickup truck.

Chapter 11

SUPERVISION, GUIDANCE, AND DISCIPLINE

11.1. Supervision. The youth director must ensure children and youths participating in youth sports are supervised for their protection and well-being. According to AFI 34-801, two adults must be present at all times when youths are present unless the area is being monitored by closed circuit surveillance. One adult must be a staff member, contract employee, or specified volunteer with required background checks. The additional person can be an adult volunteer. If several teams are practicing or playing on an outdoor area or in a gymnasium a minimum of one person with completed background checks is required.

11.2. Guidance and Discipline. Follow the guidance in AFI 34-801 and local written discipline policy for youth programs. The youth program staff and volunteers must follow the guidance policy. The behavior of any youth program staff or volunteers that is not in compliance with the guidance policy should be reviewed by the youth sports director and the youth director and a recommendation made on their continuing in the program to the youth flight chief. Any youth program staff member or volunteers who are under investigation for child abuse or neglect are to be restricted from contact with youth until the investigation of the allegation is completed. Any youth staff member or volunteers who are found to have been involved in a substantiated allegation of child abuse or neglect may not participate in the youth sports program in any position which involves contact with youth. The youth director, with the approval of the youth flight chief, establishes procedures for temporary and permanent suspension of youths who do

not follow the written rules of conduct. Procedures must include working with parent(s) to try to resolve misbehavior. When it is necessary to remove a child from a team for disciplinary reasons, the action must be approved by the youth director. The action should be based on the recommendation of the child's coach and youth sports director, and should be consistent with other similar actions.

11.3. Positive Guidance Techniques. Youth staff and volunteers must demonstrate the use of positive guidance techniques and require that parents assisting them in the conduct of practices and games also use positive guidance techniques. Coaches are to use positive guidance techniques which help youths develop self-control, self-esteem, and respect for the rights and property of others. Techniques include talking with the youth, helping the youth use negotiation to resolve conflicts, temporarily removing the youth from the situation for a few minutes, and limiting the youth's participation in the activity.

11.4. Supervision of Coaches and Officials. The sports director will monitor the officiating and conducting of games and require players and coaches to abide by the playing rules and respect officials. The sports director will attend as many games as possible, evaluating facility maintenance, team performance, officiating, and snack bar operations. The youth director and youth flight chief are also to periodically attend practices and games to ensure they are being conducted according to the National Standards for Youth Sports (attachment 2).

Chapter 12

PARTICIPATION GUIDELINES

12.1. Emphasis on Participation. The emphasis in youth sports, especially for the younger age groups, will be on skill development, enjoyment, and maximum participation. The intensity of competition for children under 12 years of age can be minimized by eliminating all-star teams, playoffs, league standing, player statistics, purchase of full-dress uniforms, and post-season tournaments. Parents must be advised prior to sign-up that the sport is recreational in nature with emphasis on skill development and fun; and that competition is not the main objective of the youth sports program.

12.2. Participation. Opportunities to participate in youth sports must be available for young athletes at all levels of playing ability. Each child must be given equal opportunity to play in every game. Use of perpetual batting order is recommended for T-ball to ensure equal playing time. The youth sports director will establish specific guidelines for youth sports and modify rules to meet certain criteria for particular sports and age groups. Mandatory playing rules may be waived for injury or discipline when the action is approved in advance by the youth sports director.

12.2.1. Guidelines for Program Components. Attachment 4 gives the parameters for organizing youth sports programs for participants ages 5 through 18. The guidelines should be followed for children who are maturing at normal rates. Ensure the youth sports program is conducted in a way that focuses on what is best for children and youth at their stage of development and growth. Participation must be appropriate for the youths' level of ability and development.

12.2.2. Age Groupings. When there are sufficient numbers of participants to field teams, no more than 2-year age groupings must be used. In no cases may an age grouping involve an age spread greater than 3 years without the approval of the MAJCOM youth specialist. Females, 15 and over, may participate in leagues for adult females when there are not sufficient numbers of females to offer leagues for girls. Any other participation of youth in adult leagues must be approved by the MAJCOM youth specialist.

12.2.3. Participation of Both Sexes. Provide both boys and girls opportunities to participate in individual and team sports. Gender specific sports activities may be offered to facilitate maximum participation by girls and boys, but participation in any league may not be restricted to one sex.

12.3. Game Modification. The youth sports director (with approval from the youth director) is authorized and may modify rules for sports or use of equipment where such changes will make play less dangerous, reduce inappropriate physical demands on young players, or make the sport more appropriate and enjoyable for young athletes.

12.4. Player Special Placement. The youth sports director is authorized to move a gifted or less gifted athlete into another age group when it is in the best interest of that child or the other children playing that sport and the parents of the child have approved the change. Such changes will be based on established written criteria. Movement of more than one age group is discouraged. Parent's permission for such moves must be obtained and the overall social and physical developmental level of the child considered.

12.5. Specialization of Position. Rotation of children into different playing positions facilitates skill development and is consistent with the purposes of youth sports. At younger age levels (10 years and under) children should be rotated among positions during practices and game play.

12.6. Coaching and Instruction During Games. For younger age groups, ages 5 to 6 years old, rules should allow for instruction to occur during games and practices. This will reduce the overemphasis on competition and make it possible for coaches to instruct fundamental skills at critical moments for learning. Over-coaching (yelling, criticizing and providing extensive direction) during games or practices is not permitted.

Chapter 13

LEAGUE STRUCTURE

13.1. Program Organization and Responsibilities. The responsibilities of the youth sports program include program organization, maintaining program unity and discipline, volunteer training, establishing program policy, ensuring safety within the program, establishing and ensuring compliance with program by-laws, and establish-

ing and conducting coaches certification programs. The initial formation of leagues is a key factor in the organization of the sports program. No one system will be effective in all situations; however, an example is presented in figure 13.1.

Figure 13.1. Organization of Sports Leagues.

LEAGUE			
Commissioner of Officials		League Commissioner	Facilities and Equipment Supervisor
AMERICAN LEAGUE		NATIONAL LEAGUE	
League President		League President	
<u>Eastern Division</u>	<u>Western Division</u>	<u>Eastern Division</u>	<u>Western Division</u>
Orioles	Yankees	Astros	Cubs
Twins	Dodgers	Giants	Pirates
Blue Jays	Royals	Tigers	Expos
Reds	Mets	Cards	Rangers

13.2. National Affiliation and Participation in Regional and National Competitions. The youth director must weigh the cost of national affiliation and participation of selected teams or players in national and regional competitions against the overall benefits received by the total group of children involved in the sports program. Use of youth sports program funds for these activities must be approved in advance by the youth flight chief.

13.3. Playing Rules. The basic playing rules for each sport will be the national or official association rules for children closest to the age of the players participating.

13.4. Player Selection and Team Organization. The system used for player selection must be as fair as possible to all teams and individual players and the process documented in step-by-step written instructions to league administrators and coaches. Written information on this

process must be also be available for parents at their request. The youth sports director and league administrators must be present during the draft and monitor the process.

13.4.1. Player Draft System. Two types of player draft systems are provided at attachment 5.

13.4.2. Player Rosters. After players are selected, each coach must be furnished a roster of all players assigned to his or her team. The coach must have this roster at all scheduled games and must make it available to any league official or opposing coach upon request. Parents should also be provided copies of these rosters for use in scheduling transportation of their child to and from games and practices. With the written permission of each child's parent(s), include the names of each child's parents and their phone number to aid parents in making transportation arrangements. Use a consent form to request the parents' written approval to release their names and phone numbers to other parents. Ensure local registration form contains the

Privacy Act Statement when asking for personal information such as the parent's phone numbers.

13.5. Base/Community Leagues. It may be necessary to join and play among off-base leagues when the base league does not have sufficient teams to provide an enjoyable program for the youths. Use of appropriated funds is authorized for group fees. Youth sports director should coordinate with off base leagues to obtain mutual agreement on league rules and guidelines.

13.6. Scheduling Games. Use RecTrac! software to schedule league games and ensure full participation. The "round robin" scheduling system is the most common type of competition used in league play. This system is effective in providing for full participation and in determining team ranking in leagues for older youth, ages 11 and up. Season rankings should be determined by the won-lost record using two points for a win, one point for a tie, and no points for a loss.

13.7. Alteration of Schedules. Only the youth sports director with the cooperation of the league administrators, may change, cancel, postpone, or alter playing schedules. The youth sports director is responsible for canceling games due to inclement weather or other unforeseeable circumstances before play begins. Once play begins the head official will make the determination. The youth sports

director will establish provisions for "make-up" games prior to the start of the regular season or tournament.

13.8. End of Season Ties. If a tie exists at the conclusion of a season, and no post-season tournament is planned, there is no need for a tie-breaking system. However, if a tie exists (for any place) and post-season play is scheduled, head-to-head competition between the tied teams should determine the higher placed team(s). If this method does not clearly determine a winner, the won-lost record against the highest placed team is used. This method continues through the standings until a winner is determined. (**NOTE:** To prevent running up the score during the season, no consideration will be given to total offensive and defensive points when determining a winner.)

13.9. Post Season Competition. Special competitions, tournament games, bowl games, or other competitions between base and off-base leagues must be scheduled by the youth sports director with approval of the Services squadron commander. Rules governing the event will be covered in pre-season meetings.

13.10. Number and Length of Practices and Games.

The information in figure 13.2 should be used in establishing practice sessions and the season for games and competitions. Deviations from these recommendations must be approved by the youth sports director.

Figure 13.2. Number and Length of Practices and Games.

AGE GROUP	PRACTICES PER WEEK (PRE & EARLY SEASON)	LENGTH OF PRACTICES (MINUTES)	GAMES PER WEEK	LENGTH OF SEASON (WEEKS)
6-8	2	45-60	1	6 + 2 of pre-season practice
9-10 practice	2	45-60	1-2	6 + 2 of pre- season
11-12	2-3	45-60	1-2	10 + 2 of pre-season practice
13-14	2-3 season practice	60-90	1-2	10 + 2 of pre-
15-18	2-3	90-120	1-2	12 + 3 of pre-season practice

Chapter 14

CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE ACTIONS

14.1. Conduct. Establishing and maintaining the highest standard of conduct must typify all behavior in the youth sports program. Behavior inappropriate for programs serving youth by coaches, managers, players, parents, and administrators must not be tolerated. Poor sportsmanship, cursing, vulgarity, or obscene gestures are not allowed on the part of an individual. Alcoholic beverages are not permitted at any function or activity sponsored by the youth sports program. The youth sports director should solicit help from coaches and parents to provide a smoke free environment at all youth sports events. Youth participating in youth sports activities should not be exposed to second hand smoke. Smoking by staff, coaches, and youth during any practices or competitions is not permitted. Misuse or abuse of playing equipment; negative comments about coaches, players, or officials; prolonged disputes with officials; and throwing objects onto or into the playing area will be considered unsportsmanlike conduct.

14.2. Discipline. The youth director will develop local operating instructions on conduct and discipline of players, coaches, parents, and league administrators in the youth sports program. These instructions must be posted in the main youth facility and must be available in written form for individuals requesting a copy.

14.3. Protest Board. Establish a protest board to serve in an advisory capacity to the youth sports director in resolving

formal protests in competitive leagues. This group of disinterested parties should give recommended action on the protest to the youth director and/or the youth support flight chief. The recommendation should be provided in writing. The board will, at a minimum, consist of two knowledgeable but disinterested parties, normally another league president, the president of the league involved, the league commissioner, or the commissioner of officials. The youth director and youth sports director, with the youth support flight chief's approval, make the final determination on protests.

14.3.1. League Protests. The primary goal of the youth sports director in handling protests should be to keep such conflicts away from the young athletes. The most effective resolutions are those that have the least effect on the players and the program. An official protest submittal should contain the following information.

14.3.1.1. Entry by the official in the official score book at the time. (Both team coaches in the game, the official and the official scorekeeper must be aware of the protest before further play is resumed.)

14.2.1.2. The date, time, and place of the contest; team involved and the names of the game official(s).

14.2.1.3. All facts pertinent to the situation in question (score at the time, time remaining, exact line-ups, coaches and players involved, etc.).

14.2.1.4. The precise rule and section of the rules under which the protest is being filed.

Chapter 15

RECOGNITION OF PLAYERS

15.1. Program Awards. Awards and recognition may be part of the youth sports program; however, their importance must be kept in perspective and minimized. Conduct programs for the fun of participation. Achieving awards and winning must not be the program's primary purpose.

15.1.1. Team/Individual Awards. Present awards for participation, for a job well done, for demonstrating good sportsmanship, and to recognize those teams and players which have succeeded in team performance. Awards should be of limited size and price. Emphasize individual awards for sportsmanship, team work, etc. at all age levels. Individual awards for superior play (e.g., most valuable player, best hitter, best offensive player, high scorer, etc) are permitted only in activities for youth 13 and older. Solicitation by any individuals or groups associated with the youth sports program to purchase "luxury" items or extra awards (e.g., warm-up suits, jackets, jerseys, sweat bands, etc.) is prohibited.

15.1.2. Participation Awards. Giving patches, certificates, or T-shirts to all players for participation is encouraged. However, participants who are dismissed from a team for disciplinary reasons or those who resign or quit before the end of a season, including playoffs, are not eligible for recognition unless their departure is related to the transfer or retirement of their parent or their parent's absence because of a prolonged TDY or deployment.

15.2. Promises. Under no circumstances may promises of special activities, functions, awards, or prizes be made to the players, their coaches, or parents by coaches, team parents, or volunteers unless prior approval is given by the youth sports director. Such activities do not include team parties or other minor functions which promote team unity.

Chapter 16

FACILITIES, SUPPLIES, AND EQUIPMENT

16.1. Appearance and Condition of Facilities. The appearance and condition of playing facilities are important to the successful conduct and safety in the youth sports program. Youth sports directors must place special emphasis on facility maintenance. Safety is a major concern when maintenance is performed. Keep the areas and all equipment clean and ready for use.

16.2. Pre- and Post-Season Inspections. A pre-season inspection of sanctioned practice areas and game facilities must be completed at least 30 work days prior to the start of any team practice. The inspection team includes representatives from civil engineering, ground safety, environmental control, medical facility, the youth director, the youth sports director, and other personnel appropriate to the particular base. Utilizing the expertise of each team member will help ensure a safe playing area and safe playing conditions. Action must be taken immediately to correct noted discrepancies. The youth sports director should develop a checklist of procedures to be done before each game, after each game, daily, and weekly. From the date practice begins until the last game played, the area must be inspected daily by the youth sports director or assigned maintenance personnel and sustained at the required level. A post-season inspection by the youth director should be completed not later than one month after the season ends in order to plan and seek funding for correction of deficiencies. See attachment 6 for a pre- and post-season inspection guideline.

16.3. Turf Maintenance. The maintenance level for field turf should be based on the grass species present or selected; the turf quality desired; the geographical area, the climatic conditions; the intended use of the facility; the amount of time, personnel, and money available; and the training and capabilities of the maintenance team. Consult the civil engineer agronomist for assistance with aerating, seeding, and fertilizing.

16.3.1. Skinned Surface Areas. Maintenance of the field skinned areas requires special care. The local physical features of the fields will dictate the relative amounts of sand, silt, and clay required. Work closely with the base civil engineer to maintain a proper soil balance. The following are specific maintenance techniques relating to the skinned area of athletic fields:

16.3.1.2. Have coaches drag the skinned portion of base/softball diamonds and base paths every day immediately after practice or a game so that if it rains during the night, the area will dry smooth and not leave pockets for water to stand. Dragging of a non-grassed infield should begin from the edge of the outfield grass and work towards the pitching rubber in a circular pattern. Once the pitching

rubber area is reached, the dragging should continue in a circular pattern to the outfield grass-line area. Alternate the drag direction every other day.

16.3.1.3. Have wire leaf rakes and street brooms on hand to sweep and rake out rain soaked areas. Raking out dirt playing surface allows the air and sun to mix with surface dirt and speeds the drying process.

16.3.1.4. Stockpile additional clay and soil/dust to replace material lost by wind or to fill low spots.

16.3.1.5. To maintain the proper configuration of the baseball/softball infield, use a sod cutter in the early spring, followed by an edging once a month during the playing season.

16.3.1.6. Ensure mosquito and tick control measures are conducted to minimize the potential for bites to children and spectators. Consult with the medical and civil engineering staff as required.

16.4. Supplies and Equipment. Consider the local factors that influence the purchase and maintenance of uniforms and equipment. Examples of factors are location of base, size of program, age of participants, funds available, time involved to obtain, number of facilities, vendor availability, cleaning and repair services available, storage space available, safety considerations, and staff expertise in maintaining.

16.4.1. Uniform Purchasing. It is cost-effective to order stock items from one of the major companies on General Services Administration or Air Force Nonappropriated Fund Purchasing Office (AFNAFPO) contracts. Collect uniforms within 1 week after the end of the season. After the uniforms have been returned and cleaned; inventory and determine the need for additional items. This practice is of utmost importance in overseas or isolated locations because of the additional 60- to 90-day delay in delivery. Youth sports directors must be cautious of purchasing annual fill-in uniforms from different companies. Few companies offer the same color and design as another company.

16.5. Equipment Care. The proper care of equipment extends its useful life and enhances the safety of the program. Proper care, use, and repair/replacement are the responsibility of the youth sports director. Suggestions for proper care of equipment age given in attachment 7.

16.6. Storage. Each youth program must have a place(s) to store youth sports equipment and supplies if team and individual sports are offered. Storage rooms must be well organized, clean, have sufficient air circulation, and adequate lighting. Guidelines include:

16.6.1. Store all articles off the floor, on shelves or racks.

16.6.2. Ensure aisles between storage shelves and distance from top shelf to ceiling of storage room measure at least 2 feet.

16.6.3. Arrange seasonal items together with the most frequently used items easily accessible for quick removal.

16.6.4. Keep a running inventory of all supplies.

16.6.5. Keep an inventory of all equipment/uniforms as well as a documented equipment/uniform replacement plan.

16.6.6. Ensure the storage of equipment and uniforms is done in such a way as to minimize health risks to youth and the potential for fire hazards.

Chapter 17

PROGRAM EVALUATION

17.1. Program Evaluation. Use a variety of techniques to evaluate the youth sports program and obtain input from coaches, officials, parents, and youth. A combination of observation, interview, written evaluations, and studies of existing records and reports may be used in evaluating the sports program. Use the evaluations to:

- 17.1.1. Determine the effectiveness of the sports program in relationship to its mission and objective.
- 17.1.2. Pinpoint program areas requiring special attention.
- 17.1.3. Change the program to meet needs.
- 17.1.4. Obtain information for basis of corrective actions.

17.2. Evaluation Data. In evaluating the sports program, the objectives of the program must be reviewed prior to, during, and after the program. Compare findings from the evaluation process with the objectives, and corrective measures taken in the areas where improvement is needed. In the evaluation process, collect data about:

- 17.2.1. Scope of the program and various program phases.
- 17.2.2. Methods of administration and effectiveness of established policies and procedures.
- 17.2.3. Adequacy of the staff in terms of number, training, experience, and personal attributes.
- 17.2.4. Extent to which facilities meet program requirements.
- 17.2.5. Availability of supplies and equipment.
- 17.2.6. Measures taken to encourage participation.
- 17.2.7. Quality and amount of advance planning.
- 17.2.8. Attitude of participants and spectators.
- 17.2.9. Number and nature of disciplinary actions.
- 17.2.10. Injuries and illnesses occurring during practices and competitions.
- 17.2.11. Satisfaction of youth and parents with the program.

Chapter 18

BOOSTER CLUBS

18.1. Booster Clubs. Booster clubs are classified as Type 3 (Independent) private organizations (PO). AFI 34-123, *Private Organizations Program*, provides guidance and procedures for establishing and operating POs on Air Force installations. Booster clubs operate as self-sustaining special interest groups, set up by people acting outside the scope of any official position they may have in the Federal government. The installation commander determines if a booster club will make a positive contribution to the lives of base personnel and whether or not it conflicts with government activities, e.g., youth programs.

18.2. Purpose of Booster Clubs. With the installation commander's approval, a youth sports booster club may be organized to fulfill the needs and interests of Department of Defense families. Youth directors should maintain a positive relationship with all established youth booster clubs to foster complementary support for developmentally sound Services' youth programs. Services squadron commanders or directors must ensure that youth sports booster clubs do not usurp the youth sports programming responsibilities. The installation commander may withdraw his or her authorization if the PO prejudices or discredits the United States Government, conflicts with government activities, or for any other reasonable or just cause.

18.3. Establishing a Booster Club. Specific requirements to establish a PO are covered in AFI 34-123. The booster club group must submit a written constitution, bylaws, or other similar documents, outlined in the *Private Organization Guidance Handbook*, through the recreation support flight chief, Services squadron commander or director, and Staff Judge Advocate for consideration by the installation commander.

18.4. Operating Booster Clubs. Installation commanders provide limited supervision over POs. Their control lies in the power to authorize and withdraw authorization for the organization to operate on the installation. They ensure compliance with the requirements of AFI 34-123, but do not control or dictate internal activities or structure of the booster club PO. There will be no direct financial assistance to a booster club PO from a nonappropriated fund instrumentality (NAFI) in the form of contributions, dividends, or donations of monies or other assets. AFI 34-201, *Use of Nonappropriated Funds (NAFs)*, provides guidance on acceptance and use of contributions, donations, and commercial sponsorship in youth programs. POs may not solicit, or accept unsolicited, commercial sponsorship, but may be the beneficiaries of unsolicited gifts and donations.

18.4.1. Logistical Support. Booster clubs must furnish their own equipment, supplies, and other materials. The Air Force may provide a meeting place to Type 3 POs. Reimbursement to the Air Force is not required if a PO only occasionally uses a facility and such use is minor relative to its official uses. Only when the booster club's activities are in progress can a sign or insignia or other organizational identification be placed on or inside government facilities.

18.5. Fund-Raising Activities. AFI 34-123 guidance on PO fund-raising activities must be followed. The installation commander, or his or her designee, may authorize booster clubs occasional sales for fund-raising purposes like bake sales, dances, carnivals, or similar nonrecurring functions. Booster clubs must not engage in activities that duplicate or compete with the Army and Air Force Exchange Service or Services activities or NAFIs. Booster clubs may not sell alcoholic beverages.

PATRICK O. ADAMS, Brig General, USAF
Director of Services

GLOSSARY OF REFERENCES, ABBREVIATIONS, ACRONYMS, AND TERMS

References

AFI 34-101, *Services Programs and Patron Eligibility*
AFI 34-123, *Private Organizations Program*
AFI 34-201, *Use of Nonappropriated Funds (NAFs)*
AFI 34-801, *Youth Programs*
AFMAN 34-704, *Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect in Child Care Settings*
Private Organization Guidance Handbook
National Standards for Youth Sports

Abbreviations and Acronyms

AFI—Air Force Instruction
AFMAN—Air Force Manual
AFNAFPO—Air Force Nonappropriated Fund Purchasing Office
ASTM—American Society for Testing and Materials
CPR—cardiopulmonary resuscitation
HQ AFSVA/SVPAC—Headquarters Air Force Services Agency, Child Development and Youth Programs—Branch
HQ USAF/SVP—Headquarters United States Air Force, Services, Program Policy Division
IRC—installation records check
MAJCOM—Major Command
MWR—Morale, Welfare, and Recreation
NAF—nonappropriated funds
NAFI—Nonappropriated Fund Instrumentalities
NOCSAE—National Operating Committee for Standards in Athletic Equipment
PO—private organization
TDY—temporary duty

Terms

Child Abuse and Neglect—The physical injury, sexual maltreatment, emotional maltreatment, deprivation of necessities, or other maltreatment of a child. The term may apply to both acts and omissions on the part of a responsible person.
Contractors—Individuals employed by a contractor or contracted with individually to provide youth program services.
Contractor Employee—An individual employed by a contractor to provide youth program services.
Fitness Activities—Activities designed to educate youths about health and fitness, help them increase their fitness levels and encourage them to develop life-time fitness skills (fitness challenges, instruction sports, and special fitness events.)
Installation Records Check (IRC)—An investigation conducted through the records of all installations of an individual's identified residences for the 2 years before the date of application. This record check must include police files (base and/or military police, security office, criminal investigations, or local law enforcement agencies), Drug and Alcohol Program, Family Housing, and Medical Treatment Facility for Family Advocacy Program, to including Service Central Registry records, and mental health records, and any other record checks as appropriate, and to the extent permitted by law.
Specified Volunteer—A volunteer who performs voluntary youth services that the base commander decides requires an installation record check (IRC) due to the nature of the work the volunteer will perform.
Volunteer—Individuals who help out with programs on an unpaid basis.

NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR YOUTH SPORTS

A2.1. National Standards. (These standards are published by the NATIONAL ALLIANCE FOR YOUTH SPORTS and were developed in 1987 by 48 of the nation's leading experts representing a wide variety of disciplines affecting youth sports. They have been endorsed by over 200 agencies and organizations interested in youth sports.)

A2.2. Standard #1--Proper Sports Environment:

A2.2.1. Background. There is a wide variety of youth sports experiences available to children. Some of these begin as early as five years of age and include both collision and non-collision sports, elite and recreational play categories, single age and multi-age participation ranges and unstructured to highly-organized and competitive programs.

A2.2.2. Rationale. Because all children physically and emotionally mature at different rates, parents must evaluate very carefully their child's youth sports experience. Parents must consider and carefully choose the proper environment for their child, including the appropriate age and development for participation, the type of sport, the rules in the sport, the age range of the participants, and the proper level of physical and emotional stress. To assist parents in achieving this goal Air Force youth sports programs will offer opportunities for participation in youth sports in which

A2.2.2.1. Leagues have a minimum play rule per game for all children regardless of ability.

A2.2.2.2. Leagues organize programs within a two year age range, such as, 5-6, 7-8, 9-10, 11-12, etc.

A2.2.2.3. Leagues allow post-season play only for regular season teams and not engage in choosing post-season All Star teams.

A2.2.2.4. Leagues establish a policy of not cutting players and provide an opportunity for meaningful play for all children.

A2.2.2.5. If awards are given, leagues give participation awards and reduce emphasis on competitive trophies.

A2.2.2.6. League standings are not used below the age of 9 and are de-emphasized below the age of 13 by using only end-of-season results.

A2.3 Standard #2--Programs Based on Well-Being of Child:

A2.3.1. Background. Many organized play experiences for children are carbon copies of adult-oriented programs. The rules, skill expectations and competitive requirements are the same as in high school, college, and professional levels.

A2.3.2. Rationale. Youth sports programs should be based on maximum participation. The program should focus on organizing meaningful play. Coaches should let children be involved in making decisions. The level and length of athletic competition should be commensurate with the physical and emotional development of the child.

Parents must select youth sports programs that are developed and organized to enhance the emotional, physical, social and educational well-being of children. Air Force youth sports programs will assist parents in achieving this goal by providing youth sports opportunities in which:

A2.3.2.1. Leagues are operated using the following guidelines:

A2.3.2.1.1. For 5 to 6 year olds a developmental program is offered:

- There are no regular competitive teams.
- Scores or standings are not kept.
- Rules, equipment, and the field are modified to match the abilities of the players.
- Uniforms are limited to T-shirt and hat.
- There are no scheduled leagues, tournaments, or all-star competition.
- Leagues and coaches are not permitted to require sport specialization.
- Play is co-recreational.
- No travel is involved.
- Coaches are permitted on playing surfaces.

A2.3.2.1.2. For 7 to 8 year old's a sports introduction program is offered in which:

- Informal teams are used.
- Scores or standings are not kept.
- Rules, equipment, and fields are modified to match the abilities of the players.
- Limited uniforms are provided.
- There is no tournament, post-season play or all-star competition.
- Co-recreational play is encouraged.
- Travel is within the local community only.
- Coaches are permitted on playing surfaces.
- Leagues and coaches are not permitted to require sports specialization.

A2.3.2.1.3. For 9 to 10 year old's an organizational program is offered in which:

- Scores are kept but standings are de-emphasized.

- Rules, equipment, and fields are modified, where necessary to match the abilities of the players.
- There is no out-of-community post-season play.
- There is no national tournament participation.
- Leagues and coaches are not permitted to require sports specialization.

A2.3.2.4. For 11 to 12 year old's a skill enhancement program is offered, in which:

- Expenditures on uniforms for appearance reasons are minimized.
- Limited ability grouping are used following proper grouping procedures.
- A variety of position and situational plays are encouraged.

A2.3.2.5. Coaches are required to avoid teaching the use of sports to punish opponents through physical contact or excessive score domination.

A2.3.2.6. Year round participation is not required by leagues or coaches.

A2.3.2.7. Leagues adopt rules banning rapid weight loss/gain solely for participation in youth sports.

A2.3.2.8. Children below the age of 11 years may participate only in activities that contain limited collision potential and feature modified rules that will significantly reduce the chance of injury.

A2.3.2.9. Leagues consider weight and skill in grouping children.

A2.3.2.10. Coaches apply proper principles of conditioning and nutrition.

A2.4. Standard #3--Drug, Tobacco, and Alcohol-Free Environment:

A2.4.1. Background. Pressures and opportunities for children to be involved in drug, tobacco and alcohol abuse have increased to crises proportions during the past decades. Unsupervised social interaction and unknowledgeable adult leadership have contributed to the problem.

A2.4.2. Rationale. Coaches and parents must be educated about all drugs, including performance enhancement chemicals. Leagues should have policies dealing with drug, tobacco and steroid use and emphasizing prevention through education. Parents, league administrators, and coaches should be taught what to look for in abuse of these drugs and know how to access community resources for assistance on drug-related problems.

Parents must encourage a drug, tobacco and alcohol-free environment for their children. Air Force youth sports programs will assist parents in this effort by offering youth sports programs in which:

A2.4.2.1. Leagues adopt rules prohibiting the use of alcohol, illegal substances or tobacco by coaches, league administrators, or game officials at all youth sports events.

A2.4.2.2. Leagues provide coaches and parents educational information on identifying signs and symptoms for substance use by children.

A2.4.2.3. Leagues establish policy and implementation procedures for immediately dealing with substance use by coaches and players and communicate these policies to coaches, players, and parents.

A2.4.2.4. Leagues continually encourage dialogue between coaches, players and parents about the need for an alcohol, tobacco and drug-free environment for children.

A2.5. Standard #4--Part of a Child's Life:

A2.5.1. Background. The foundation for human development occurs during the early years of life. Individuals are exposed to many different learning situations to increase their potential for successful development.

A2.5.2. Rationale. Parents, coaches and league administrators need to encourage children to be involved in a variety of activities while recognizing that the home, church, school and a variety of other social experiences are all a part of a child's growth and development. Parents must respect a child's decision not to play. Coaches and parents must realize that youth sports involvement also has ramifications for the entire family. Parents should insist that youth sports participation not detract from the child's academic progress.

Parents must recognize that youth sports are only a part of a child's life. To help parents achieve this standard the Air Force youth sports program will offer programs in which:

A2.5.2.1. Leagues adopt a policy that allows for and encourages participation in a variety of youth activities in addition to the child's particular sport.

A2.5.2.2. Leagues and coaches do not demand year-round involvement in a particular sport as a condition of meaningful participation.

A2.5.2.3. Leagues establish rules that limit organized practices to no more than 1 hour a day and three days a week through the age of 12 and not more than 1 1/2 hours and four days a week through the age of 16.

A2.5.2.4. Leagues adopt a policy that makes provisions for excused absences through parental requests for church, school, and other family activities.

A2.6. Standard #5--Training:

A2.6.1. Background. Sports participation can lead to harm if those responsible have no training. In most cases, youth sports organizations allow volunteers to coach without performing any background check.

A2.6.2. Rationale. Parents should insist that coaches are educated in the following areas: psychological and emotional needs of children, safety and first aid, conditioning and nutrition, teaching proper sports techniques and drug awareness.

Parents must insist that coaches are trained and certified. To help parents in meeting this goal Air Force youth sports programs will ensure:

A2.6.2.1. Leagues require coaches be annually trained and certified in the areas of the emotional needs of children, safety and first aid, conditioning and nutrition, teaching proper sport techniques, and drug and tobacco education.

A2.6.2.2. League administrators and officials are trained in the aforementioned areas.

A2.6.2.3. Leagues use appropriate and available screening techniques for selecting and assigning coaches to ensure that children are protected from abuse.

A2.6.2.4. Leagues are encouraged to provide additional educational resources for coaches to assist them in providing the best possible youth sports experiences for each child.

A2.6.2.5. All coaches sign a code of ethics pledging their commitment to provide an enjoyable, healthful youth sports experience.

A2.7. Standard #6--Parents' Active Role:

A2.7.1. Background. Many parents pass their youngsters over to others, relying on someone else to take responsibility for their child's youth sports experience.

A2.7.2. Rationale. Parents are the key. They need to demonstrate the positive benefits of a youth sports experience by attending games, practices, or team social events; or by taking the time to volunteer as a coach or league official; or by just expressing their positive support. Parents should discuss with their child why the child is participating and help him/her in evaluating his or her experience.

Parents must make a serious effort to take an active role in the youth sports experience of their child providing positive support as a spectator, coach, league administrator and/or caring parent. In order to encourage and support parent participation Air Force youth sports programs will ensure:

A2.7.2.1. Parents are required to attend a league orientation meeting. This may be one-on-one with a league official, if necessary.

A2.7.2.2. Teams are required to have a minimum of one team/parents' meeting each sports season.

A2.7.2.3. Leagues advertise for parent involvement in roles such as, coach, team manager, fund-raiser, league manager, special assistant, and fan.

A2.7.2.4. Leagues encourage parent-child communication about their youth sports experience through newsletters, team meetings, coach-parent and coach-player discussions, and league handbooks and guidelines.

A2.8 Standard #7--Positive Role Models:

A2.8.1. Background. Children will follow the example of the adult role model and in particular, the parent. Children will copy or imitate their parents' sports behavior, including the development of values based on that behavior.

A2.8.2. Rationale. If the youth sports experience is to be a positive one for each child, parents must also demonstrate sportsmanlike behavior as a fan, coach, and league administrator. They need to encourage fun, give lots of praise for the little successes along the way and, when a child makes a mistake, separate the mistake from the child. Parents need to encourage peer support and give positive verbal support to team members, opponents and coaches of their child.

Parents must be a positive role model exhibiting sportsmanlike behavior at games, practices, and home while giving positive reinforcement to their child and support to their child's coaches. To help ensure that children are presented with positive team models Air Force youth sports programs will require

A2.8.2.1. Leagues have a sportsmanship/conduct code prohibiting unacceptable behavior, e.g., berating players, coaches, and officials; use of vulgar language, and intoxication.

A2.8.2.2. Leagues communicate conduct requirements to coaches, parents, players and spectators through newsletters, handbooks, postings, and announcements.

A2.8.2.3. Leagues develop an enforcement plan for implementing a sportsmanship code including removal procedures.

A2.9 Standard #8--Parental Commitment:

A2.9.1. Background. Individuals that sign commitments are usually more positive and supportive of their children.

A2.9.2. Rationale. The parents should be knowledgeable of the opportunities and responsibilities for having their child involved in youth sports. They should also be requested to demonstrate their commitment by signing a code which outlines

the opportunities their child should have through participation, as well as the responsibility the parent has in supporting the youth sports experience.

Parents must demonstrate their commitment to their child's youth sports experience by annually signing a parental code of ethics. The Air Force will encourage all parents or guardians of children who desire to have their child participate in the youth sports program to sign such a commitment.

A2.10. Standard #9--Safe Playing Situation:

A2.10.1. Background. Children participating in youth sports are exposed to a variety of facilities, training programs and organized risk taking opportunities. Most adult leaders do not have coaching degrees or university coaching certification.

A2.10.2. Rationale. Coaches and league administrators have the responsibility to inspect and ensure proper maintenance of facilities; have knowledge of proper equipment fitting, selection and appropriate use; understand the physical consequence of improper skill techniques; have the ability to modify rules for safe-playing situations; understand the physical need for a proper child-oriented conditioning program; understand proper weight control practices and have knowledge of prevention and first aid for athletic injuries including the ability to implement emergency procedures.

Parents must insist on safe playing facilities, healthful playing situations and proper first aid applications, should need arise. In order to ensure that Air Force youth sports programs provide these conditions:

A2.10.2.1. Leagues develop procedures for inspecting playing facilities for safety hazards before every youth sports activity.

A2.10.2.1.1. Leagues select equipment designed to ensure injury reduction for participants, (e.g. baseballs designed to reduce injuries, soccer shin guards, approved protective equipment in contact sports).

A2.10.2.1.2. Leagues develop procedures for continual safety selections of all playing equipment.

A2.10.2.1.3. Leagues ensure that teams have a fully equipped first aid kit at all youth sports activities.

A2.10.2.1.4. Leagues establish a plan for coaches on how to handle all emergencies at youth sports activities.

A2.10.2.1.5. Leagues establish procedures to ensure that all teams and events have an emergency first aid plan and equipment for dealing with injuries, hazards and weather conditions.

A2.10.2.1.6. Leagues do not allow participation during unsafe conditions, such as, lightening storms, darkness, playing sites in disrepair, etc.

A2.10.2.1.7. Leagues remove coaches that knowingly require or allow a player to play while having a serious injury or knowingly create unsafe play situations.

A2.10.2.1.8. Leagues require coaches to have CPR and advanced first aid training.

A2.11 Standard #10--Equal Play Opportunity:

A2.11.1. Background. The cost of participation in youth sports has risen dramatically during the past several years as have the number of single parent families. Although sports opportunities for girls and racial minorities have improved, many adults still fail to recognize the contribution of the youth sports experience for all children.

A2.11.2. Rationale. All children must have the opportunity to play regardless of race, creed, sex, economics status or ability. The coaches and league officials should recognize sex/role stereotyping and demand that racial prejudice of any type be prohibited. Every effort should be made to provide financial assistance to those youngsters unable to afford participation, including the cost of safe equipment. Adult youth sports leaders must teach tolerance of, and respect for, people of all abilities, sizes, shapes, colors, cultural, and economic backgrounds. Youth sports should be a growth rather than a limiting experience. Parents, coaches and league administrators must provide equal sports play opportunity for all youth regardless of race, creed, sex, economic status or ability. Toward that end Air Force youth sports programs must ensure:

A2.11.2.1. Leagues adopt a non-discrimination policy that ensures participation for all youngsters regardless of race, creed, sex, economic status or ability.

A2.11.2.2. Leagues make provisions so that all youngsters may be able to participate regardless of their financial ability to play.

A2.11.2.3. Leagues are encouraged to provide co-recreational programs through age 12.

A2.11.2.4. Leagues adopt an affirmative action coaching recruitment policy that provides for the recruitment and selection of qualified women and minorities.

A2.12 Standard #11--Drug, Tobacco, and Alcohol-Free Adults:

A2.12.1 Background. Sports participation has long been characterized as a means of developing character and positive values. Recent information indicates that competitive pressures, negative sports peer group associations and unhealthy adult role models may actually increase the risk of drug, tobacco and alcohol use among youth participants.

A2.12.2. Rationale. Because of the influence they exert, parents involved in youth sports should understand that they must refrain from substance use, including smoking, alcohol consumption, chewing tobacco, and illegal drugs at games, practices and other youth sports events. Healthful role modeling should lead the way in influencing youngsters to avoid drug, tobacco and alcohol use.

Parents as coaches, fans, and league administrators must be drug, tobacco and alcohol-free at youth sports activities. To help parents meet this standard Air Force youth sports programs must ensure:

A2.12.2.1. Leagues require coaches, league administrators and game officials to refrain from the use of alcohol, illegal substances and tobacco at youth sports events.

A2.12.2.2. Leagues require that alcohol will not be sold or allowed to be brought into youth sports games and practices.

A2.12.2.2. Leagues encourage spectators not to use tobacco at youth sports events.

A2.12.2.3. Leagues develop an enforcement plan for removing coaches, parents and spectators who are under the influence of alcohol or illegal substances.

SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT SUGGESTIONS

A3.1. Supplies and equipment suggested for a T-ball team:

- Batting Tees
- Whiffle Balls
- Safety Balls
- Safety Bats, Foam Coated
- Gloves
- Fielder's Gloves
- Throw Down Bases
- First Aid Kit
- Scorebook

A3.2. Supplies and equipment suggested for a baseball/softball team:

- Safety Balls
- Bats
- Batter's Protective Helmets, NOCSAE Approved
- Helmet Face Shields
- Catcher's Safety Helmet
- Catcher's Mask with Throat Protector
- Catcher's Body Protectors (M) and (F)
- Catcher's Leg Guards
- Fielder's Gloves
- First Base Mitt
- First Aid Kit
- Scorebook

A3.3. Supplies and equipment suggested for a basketball team:

- Basketballs
- Ball Bag
- First Aid Kit
- Scorebook
- Mouth guards
- Protective Eye Goggles

A3.4. Supplies and equipment suggested for a soccer team:

- Soccer Balls
- Carry Bag
- Shin Guards
- Foam Soccer Balls
- Plastic Cones
- First Aid Kit
- Scorebook

A3.5. Supplies and equipment suggested for a flag football team:

- Flag Belts, Velcro Style
- Junior or Youth Size Footballs
- Foam Footballs
- First Aid Kit

A3.6. Supplies and equipment for a volleyball team:

- Volleyballs
- First Aid Kit
- Scorebook
- Knee pads

A3.7. Supplies and equipment suggested for a football team:

- Footballs
- Kicking Tee
- Shoulder Pads
- Football Pants with Knee, Thigh, and Hip Pads
- Neck roll
- Helmets with Face Masks
- First Aid Kit
- Score book
- Mouth guards
- Protective cups

GUIDELINES FOR PROGRAM COMPONENTS

A4.1. Guidance for ages 6 through 12 covered in the National Standards for Youth Sports, attachment 2.

A4.2. Guidance for ages 13 through 18 not specifically covered in the National Standards for Youth Sports. The following guidance is given:

A4.2.1. 13 to 14 years--Complex Skill Development and Game Strategy.

- Stress conditioning program designed to enhance players' speed, endurance, strength agility, and flexibility.
- Improve the skills and techniques of each player.
- Develop team building tactics.

A4.2.2. 15 through 18 years--Complex Skill Development and Game Refinement.

- Refine specific skills.
- Effectively condition players.
- Develop and require good sportsmanship during competition.
- Stress rules of the games, many of which are designed to prevent injuries.
- Make sure that every safety precaution has been taken.

PLAYER DRAFT SYSTEMS

A5.1. Optional Player Draft System Number One:

A5.1.1. Step 1. Explain the objectives and procedures of the draft. Make certain all coaches understand the system.

A5.1.2. Step 2. Explain to the coaches:

A5.1.2.1. Coaches are only distributing talent and are not selecting the team they will be coaching. Team assignment will be determined by draw after the teams are equalized.

A5.1.2.2. When completing the roster of players as the draft progresses, make certain full names, ages, experience and telephone numbers are entered on the team roster forms being compiled. This information will be needed later in the draft and will save a lot of time and research. As players are selected from the master list, make certain all coaches delete them from their copy of the master list.

A5.1.3. Step 3. In the case where siblings need to be transferred after the draft, wait until all coaches have been assigned before making any changes.

A5.1.4. Step 4. The sports director will place numbers in a hat equal to the number of teams. The head coach or his or her representative from each team will then draw one number for order of player selection. Pass out team roster forms with numbers matching the number drawn. The team that draws #1 will be assigned team #1 and will have first choice in the first round of the draft, #2 gets second choice, #3 third, and so forth.

A5.1.5. Step 5. Draft the players in the order just drawn, using the "Z" method as shown below:

"Z" METHOD OF ORDER OF DRAFT

(4 TEAM, 20 PLAYER EXAMPLE)

Team #1 Team #2 Team #3 Team #4

First Round 1 2 3 4

Second Round 8 7 6 5

Third Round 9 10 11 12

Fourth Round 16 15 14 13

Fifth Round 17 18 19 20

A5.1.6. Additional Factors. In some instances, and if the coaches so desire, age, weight, height and experience may be compared by averaging the totals of each team selected. In most cases, coaches rely on their own ratings of the players over the averages of such criteria.

A5.1.7. When to Draw. After all coaches, league administrators and the sports director are satisfied that the teams are as evenly matched as possible, the draw for teams will begin. If controversy exists over the matching of teams, the sports director has final authority.

A5.1.8. Step 6. Player draft is completed, coaches shall draw for the team they will coach.

A5.1.9. Step 7. After teams have been drawn, siblings will be transferred to the appropriate team. This transfer must be made between players of equal or better ability according to the order the players were drafted (i.e., a parent coach who wants his or her sibling transferred to their team must transfer to the losing team an equal round draft choice or higher). The child of the assistant coach may not be transferred if both child and the head coach's child are number one draft choices.

A5.2. Optional Player Draft System Two:

A5.2.1. Initial Sign-Up:

A5.2.1.1. Obtain past experience of players (position, and number of seasons).

A5.2.1.2. Include space for parents to print their names (coaches will need during season).

A5.2.1.3. Add to current sign-up sheet:

- Any injuries or medical conditions the coaches should be aware of.
- Both parents work telephone numbers.

- Height, weight, shirt and pants size, etc.

A5.2.2. Team Selection. Prior to player evaluations (try-outs):

A5.2.2.1. League administrators fill in applicable information on evaluators rating list:

- Points for player's age.
- Points for seasons played.

A5.2.2.2. Brief all evaluators:

- Point system.
- Look for skills not results.
- Be consistent.
- Double check totals.
- Sign evaluator's check list.

A5.2.2.3. Have a minimum of four evaluators (evaluators must be experienced in the sports):

- Non-coaches.
- Coaches in the same division.
- Coaches from other age divisions.

A5.2.3. During Player Evaluation:

- Separate evaluators.
- Do not allow evaluators to compare scores.
- Run each participant through a drill before beginning another.

A5.2.4. Post Player Evaluations:

- Turn in rating list to league administrators.
- Stand by for player distribution.

A5.2.5. League Administrators' Responsibilities. Rank all players, highest number of points to lowest. Drop players' personal names and then assign number for each player. Place player's number on rating list - hold for coaches until after team selection. Write player's number, total points and any other comments (i.e., pitcher, catcher, etc.) on a blackboard or on large sheet of paper.

A5.2.6. Final Team Selection:

- Coaches equally distribute players (coaches are unaware of players names). Add totals for each team. Arrange totals as close as possible.
- Coaches draw teams.
- Coaches get their own child by trading a player of equal or higher ability.
- Siblings can be placed on the same team only if both coaches agree to the trade.

A5.2.7. Head Coaches' Children. Parent head coaches may automatically be assigned their son or daughter; however, the number of coaches allowed this privilege per team should be determined at the beginning of each season for each respective sport.

A5.2.8. Additional Player Assignments. After the player draft, assignment of players remaining should be made only by the sports director or league commissioner.

A5.2.9. Setting Team Roster Limit. The number of players on a team roster will be determined by the number of players registered. The number should be as evenly matched between teams as possible. Player assignment after the draft should be based primarily on the relative strength of the teams, with the objective of keeping the teams as evenly matched as possible.

PRE- AND POST-SEASON INSPECTION GUIDELINES

A6.1. Baseball and Softball Facilities:

- A6.1.1. The surface of home plate is smooth.
- A6.1.2. The pitcher's rubber is level with the surrounding surface.
- A6.1.3. The pitcher's rubber is secured safely into the ground.
- A6.1.4. The pitcher's rubber does not show unsafe wear or gouges.
- A6.1.5. Bases are flush with infield surface.
- A6.1.6. The framework for bases is secure with working breakaway mechanism.
- A6.1.7. The groundwork stake for the base does not protrude above the surface grade.
- A6.1.8. Sprinkler heads, water lines, or service boxes are flush with the surface.
- A6.1.9. Concrete footings for fencing are not exposed above ground.
- A6.1.10. The fence that encloses the field area is in safe condition.
- A6.1.11. Fencing is securely attached to the fence posts.
- A6.1.12. The fencing is free from protrusions--no sharp points exposed along the top edge.
- A6.1.13. Fence posts are secure.
- A6.1.14. Running paths and sliding zones near bases are leveled.
- A6.1.15. Pitcher's mound does not show ruts.
- A6.1.16. The soil provides adequate drainage.
- A6.1.17. The playing surface is free of obstacles such as rocks, roots, and other protrusions from the ground.
- A6.1.18. Turf surface is uniform and free of ruts and grooves.
- A6.1.19. Turf is free from weeds or thorns.
- A6.1.20. No sharp points, corners or edges on any component of the bleachers.
- A6.1.21. Wood parts of bleachers are smooth without splinters.
- A6.1.22. Bleacher footings are stable.
- A6.1.23. All bleacher fasteners are tight.
- A6.1.24. Bleacher guard rails are in good condition.
- A6.1.25. The beam direction of the field lights are focused correctly.
- A6.1.26. All field lamps are good.
- A6.1.27. All free-standing light poles should be heavily padded.

A6.2. Indoor Courts (basketball or volleyball):

- A6.2.1. Floor provides sufficient resilient to permit the natural bouncing of balls and jumping by participants.
- A6.2.2. Floor markings are easily seen by players.
- A6.2.3. The court is uniformly and adequately lighted.
- A6.2.4. The outside boundary space is unobstructed.
- A6.2.5. The padding on the end wall under the goal extends to a height of 7 feet and is in good condition.
- A6.2.6. The Poly High-Carb vinyl type material padding on the bottom and each side of the all-rectangular backboards is in good condition.
- A6.2.7. All portable backstops have the bases padded to a height of 7 feet on the court-side surface.
- A6.2.8. A sign is attached to portable backstops such as "Danger--please do not climb on backstop."

A6.3. Soccer Fields:

- A6.3.1. Sidelines are free of obstructions, such as wooden or metal stakes.
- A6.3.2. Surface is uniform and free of ruts and grooves.
- A6.3.3. Fields are marked with non-caustic material.
- A6.3.4. Corner flags posts are made of flexible material and have rounded tops.
- A6.3.5. Soccer goals are securely anchored.
- A6.3.6. Soccer goals are white.
- A6.3.7. Soccer nets are attached to goal and firmly fastened to the ground behind the goal.

A6.4. Common Support Facilities:

- A6.4.1. Rest room facilities are in good working condition.
- A6.4.2. Water fountains are in good working condition.
- A6.4.3. Concession stands and/or dugouts are free from peeling paint or deteriorating wood.
- A6.4.4. Signage is relevant, communicative and properly posted, e.g., outfield distance signs are visible from home plate.

A6.4.5. All panic hardware is in working condition.

A6.4.6. Pathways from activity related areas to emergency exits are unobstructed.

A6.4.7. All activity rooms and storage areas in youth centers have correct locking devices--no padlocks, chains, sliding bolts or hook and eyes on outside.

EQUIPMENT CARE SUGGESTIONS

A7.1. Care of Inflated Balls:

- A7.1.1. Store balls inflated, but at less than normal pressure unless the manufacturer specifies otherwise.
- A7.1.2. Always moisten the needle, preferably with glycerin, when inflating a ball with a rubber core valve. If the needle is moistened with the mouth, remove moisture from needle. A rusty needle will damage the core of the valve.
- A7.1.3. Always use a pressure gauge to ensure correct inflation. Inflation materially affects the shape and the life of the ball. Correct pounds of inflation are normally inscribed on the ball.
- A7.1.4. Clean inflated balls regularly with a good saddle soap or ball cleaner. Air dry.
- A7.1.5. Dry balls that have been out in wet weather at normal temperature. Never store near a radiator or other heating units.

A7.2. Care of Badminton, Squash, and Tennis Rackets:

- A7.2.1. Keep rackets in a cool, dry storeroom.
- A7.2.2. Check for cracks and possible frayed strings. Repair strings immediately.

A7.3. Care of Tennis, Volleyball, and Badminton Nets:

- A7.3.1. When not in use, loosen nets to relieve stretching. In damp areas, use tarred creosote net for best results.
- A7.3.2. If steel cables are used to support nets, oil and keep in constant repair.

A7.4. Care of Table Tennis. Store table tennis equipment when not in use. When necessary, paint the table tops with a coat of flat floor paint. Keep surface clean, nets straight, and the edges of the table sanded and painted.

A7.5. Care of Mats:

- A7.5.1. Carry, never pull, mats across the floor. Clean canvas mats with a vacuum cleaner and every three months clean with a commercial mat cleaner, if available. Clean rubber and plastic mats with soap and water. If rips and tears appear, use rubber or plastic patches to repair the outer surfaces.
- A7.5.2. Repair minor tears and rips in canvas mats with a heavy needle and thread. Have major repairs made by experienced personnel at the factory or at the base parachute shop if these services are available. Never paint canvas mats.